

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

JANUARY
1995

PROCESSED

DEC 12 1994

GTU LIBRARY

The Hidden Promise:

A Study of The Ten Commandments

New years and promises seem to go hand in hand. Somehow, twelve new months and 365 new days, fresh from the hand of God, seem to call forth our resolve.

"Yes," we say, we will be more faithful in studying God's Word.

"Yes," we will take better care of our bodies, as God would have us. "Yes," we will be better stewards of God's gifts. "Yes," we will watch what we eat, what we say, what we commit to, what....

Before our list of promises gets too long, however, we must stop in our very tracks and listen to the words on the lips of God. And these words—always, and especially at the start of this new Bible study year—are about what God first promises us!

God acting first, and in love, for us. That is what God's story is all about. God's love is the context for this year's Bible study, "The Hidden Promise: A Study of the Ten Commandments."

You'll soon note how important story is to Bible study writer Dr. James Nestingen, and to us, as you see how each month's Bible study contains a story text as well as a study text. See also his article "The Word on Your Lips" (p. 12).

Story is central to one of the resources available to supplement the Bible study. On a 30-minute audiotape—which comes with the resource book—author Nestingen tells brief (2-3 minutes) stories that help set the stage for each ses-

sion. See p. 30 for more information about the resources available to enrich your study of The Ten Commandments.

In fact, we think this study is too good to keep within Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. How about invitin



On the cover: God's promise, so big, so enveloping in our lives; yet sometimes we miss it. Did you find it on this month's front and back covers?

the men's group or adult forum in your congregation to study it side by side with your women's group. Or your church might want to feature James Nestingen's videotape series on the Ten Commandments to run in tandem with the LWV study. [The five-videotape set: \$99.95; order from Augsburg Fortress, LT35-8127-2076.] And how about a possible tie-in with the confirmation class, or the parents of confirmands as they study the creeds and Luther's Small Catechism?

Much of the rest of this month

(continued on inside back cover)

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

January 1995
Volume 8
No. 1

The Hidden Promise: A Study of The Ten Commandments

2 Introducing the 1995 Bible Study

3 The Hidden Promise

James Arne Nestingen

The first session of the Bible study looks at the promise of the First Commandment.

Setting the Stage for Studying the Ten Commandments

The Gospel and the Law: Hand in Hand

Daniel R. Burow

The Ten Commandments are the diagnosis; the Gospel is the cure.

0 Glory and Grace

Daniel Erlander

Introducing Moses, a barefoot kind of guy.

7 What is Most Certainly True?

Susan Niemi

A look at Luther's *Small Catechism*.

Promises, Promises

3 Getting Something for Nothing

Linda Post Bushkofsky

God's promises: the ultimate irrevocable trust.

4 Streams in the Desert

Heidi B. Neumark

Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?

Lutheran Woman Today (ISSN 0896-209X), a magazine for all women, is developed by Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and published monthly except August by Augsburg Fortress, 426 S. Fifth St., Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440. Lutheran Woman Today editorial offices are at 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631. Opinions expressed in the magazine are those of the writers and, except for the Women of the ELCA department and the Bible study, are not necessarily those of the Women of the ELCA.

Copyright © 1994 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Duplication in whole or in part in any form is prohibited without written permission from the publisher. Printed in U.S.A.

Second class postage paid at Minneapolis, MN, and additional mailing offices. Annual subscriptions: group rate, \$8.00 (regular or big print edition); individual, \$10.00 (regular or big print edition); outside North America add \$6.00 for postage. Single copies, \$1.35 (regular or big print edition). Audiotape edition for the visually impaired \$10.00. Payable in U.S. funds.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Lutheran Woman Today Circulation, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209.

Stories, Stories

12 The Word on Your Lips

James Arne Nestingen

"Speak the truth in love and tell the old, old story."

14 Jesus is Presented at the Temple

Three women from overseas reflect on an Epiphany story.

19 My Father was a Pharmacist

A paralyzed man learns his true value.

31 The Benediction

Marj Leegard

A story of family, marriage and thankfulness.

And more...

34 Simple Tasks, Big Differences

Debra Illingworth Greene

Lutherans respond in love to people living with AIDS.

43 The 1994 LWT Index

Which articles were your favorites?

As Always...

* Editor's note

22 Bible study

31 Give us this day

33 SisterCare

38 Women of the ELCA

For the benefit of Women of the ELCA participants, articles relating to Women of the ELCA mission areas are marked, at their conclusion, with these symbols:

A=action, **C**=community and **G**=growth.

Editor: Nancy J. Stelling

Managing Editor: Sue Edison-Swift

Assistant Editor: Cynthia J. Mickelson

Production Editor: Carolyn Berge

Secretary: Margarita Rojas

Graphic Design: Lilja Baehr Design

Guest Planners: Karen Battle, Doris Strieter

Art & Photos:

Cover graphics, Lilja Baehr Design.

Daniel Erlander, 10-11; Lilja Baehr Design, 31.

Reader Calls

Two reader calls are due soon: "Faith and My Family" is due by 1-3-95. "My Good Neighbor" is due by 2-1-95. Essays should be up to 350 words, typed and double-spaced. Send to Reader Call, Lutheran Woman Today, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4189. Essayists excerpted in LWT will receive a one-year subscription to LWT as payment for first rights, one-time use of their work. For more information see the October 1994 LWT, pp. 41-42.

Getting Something for Nothing

Linda Post Bushkofsky

When I was practicing law, “promises” were the stuff that contracts were made of. I drafted leases where the landlord promised to provide an apartment upon the tenant’s tendering monthly rental payments. I drafted employment contracts where the employee, in exchange for her employment and salary, would forego competing against the employer if and when the employee left the company.

Mutual agreements. Reciprocal commitments. These are the promises of the business world, of the earthly kingdom. We all make promises like these, and we all break promises like these, whether intentionally or not. Why, some lawyers make their entire living based on broken promises—we call them contract disputes.

God’s promises are different.
God’s promises can be trusted,
for they are always fulfilled.

God’s promises are different. God’s promises can be trusted, for they are always fulfilled. Unlike the mutual agreements and reciprocal commitments of our business world, God’s promises and grace require no reciprocal action on our part. Herein lies the great paradox—the “something for nothing” paradox, I like to call it.

Ours is a culture that relishes the “buy one, get one free” marketing ploys of grocery stores. Cosmetic advertisements offer similar gimmicks—the tote bag with sample products comes “free with your \$40 purchase.” We earn free airline tickets by flying frequently. Every tenth wash we receive a free car wash.

We would like to believe we are getting something for nothing, but deep down we know there really is no such thing as a “free lunch.” Yet our culture is one where people really do want something for nothing.

Somehow, though, when it comes to our spiritual lives, we

are uncomfortable accepting something for nothing. This is the great paradox. Through God's grace, we are given the gift of eternal life and we don't have to "pay" for it. It's something for nothing. It's the most miraculous something for nothing. But what do we do? We don't simply accept this gift; but instead we try to earn God's grace through our own actions, through our own good works. We are a curious lot!

In his 1520 treatise, *The Freedom of a Christian*, Luther talked about this great paradox in this way. Luther tells us that all of Scripture is divided into two parts: commandments and promises. While we wish to live out the commandments, we find it impossible to keep any one of them by our own efforts. The promises of God, on the other hand, tell us that if we want to fulfill the commandments we need simply believe in Christ "in whom grace, righteousness, peace, liberty, and all things are promised you."

What a most miraculous something for nothing, if we but believe. God's promises are always fulfilled. It's as simple as that. **G**

Linda Post Bushkofskey is the administrator of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA. She is a member of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Whitehall, Pennsylvania, where her husband, Dennis, serves as pastor.



Streams

Heidi B. Neumark

*"For waters shall break forth in
the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a
pool,
and the thirsty ground
springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall
become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds
and rushes"
(Isaiah 35:6-7).*

"Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil and all his empty promises?"

"I do!" shouts Delores, moments before her daughter is raised from the water, glistening wet with the promise of God. It was a long trip to that font in the South Bronx of New York City. The journey led through a desert haunted by jackals and dotted with mirages that promised life-giving water and dissolved to dust.

There was the promise of love, but it dissolved into angry shouts.

in the Desert

crises, broken bones and deep wounds of self-doubt. This promise of love would surface over and over again in different relationships, only to fade away.

There was the promise of peaceful respite from the pressures of poverty, abuse and raising children with too little money, too little space, too little education, too little hope...but the promise of beer bottles and crack vials dissolved into hangovers, addiction, prostitution and despair. Shame burned the future into desert sand and thirsty land.

The welfare system promised relief but instead bore down like a jackal ripping the family apart, tearing down self-esteem, giving training for jobs that didn't exist—another mirage.

Finally there was the promise of moving with three small children from a shelter for battered women into a city-owned apartment, only to be awakened by the sound of cat-sized rats chewing their way through the walls and ceiling. Delores had a choice. Stay or become homeless. For the sake of her children, she chose homelessness.

"Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil and all his empty promises?" "I do!" shouts Delores. It was a long trip to that font, but Delores remembers how she got there. She remembers the desert not only as a place of mirages, but as a place of miracles, a place where she finally met up with the promise of God.

The Word of God appeared as a pool from which Delores began to drink deeply and frequently in Bible study, worship, at home. Prayer—alone and with others—streamed out, slowly restoring the scorched land of her heart and mind. The welcome and acceptance of other sisters was a spring in the wilderness of loveless labels: "welfare mother," "addict," "dropout," "case number." And it was all for real, no mirage. As Delores puts it: "Jesus' promise—that's the one you can bet your last breath on, that he'll be there for you."

And so Delores arrived with her daughter at the font. She arrived like one of the multitude from the book of Revelation who conquered the seven-headed beast to stand beside the sea of glass with the harps of God in their hands, singing the song of salvation. In Delores' case, it is a tambourine instead of a

harp. And in that glassy sea, surrounded by the needs and rushes of grace, Delores saw mirrored back to herself the true promise she had become. No mirage—a miracle!

Having once stood at the font, Delores now stands and sits besides her sisters—leading a woman's group that studies the Bible and works on issues of abuse, homelessness, AIDS pre-

"Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?"

vention and others. There is much talk of broken promises—by landlords, by men, by the women themselves—but Delores hands out Bibles and speaks freely of her experience in the desert with an authority that others can

believe in. There are conversations, prayers, acceptance and hope—all springs in the thirsty ground of a Thursday afternoon.

In addition to the transformation that occurs in the individual lives of participants in Delores' group, there is a desire to work to make a more promising future for others in this place. In one project, the women joined in an ecumenical campaign against local corruption in public education in a district where 80 percent of children read below grade level. One woman in the group who had previously spent most of her time closed up in her apartment, feeling alone and depressed, promised to help her congregation reach its goal of collecting 1000 signatures. She single-handedly collected 2000 signatures and, more important, discovered some good news about her own promise. In a neighborhood where one in five adults tests positive for the HIV virus, the women have decided to take the test and face the results together. Sisters join hands in prayer and mutual support. The jackals back off.

"Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?"

"I do!" shouts Delores, moments before her daughter is raised from the water, glistening wet with the promise of God. The daughter's name is, itself, a promise—"Genesis, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

"For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert." **CG**

The Rev. Heidi Neumark serves as pastor of Transfiguration Lutheran Church and on the board of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. She lives in the Bronx, New York, with her husband and two children.



The Gospel and the Law: *Hand in Hand*

Daniel R. Burow

I had just completed the last in a series of sermons on the Ten Commandments. As I greeted people at the door after the service, a worshiper said to me, "There certainly is a lot of gospel in the law, isn't there?"

I assume she meant that I had included a lot of gospel in the sermon. (I certainly hope that I had.) Or, perhaps she meant that God's love is quite apparent also in the Commandments. (It certainly is.) What she did not mean, I hope, is that the Commandments contain a lot of gospel, because they do not.

Law and gospel are two very different principles. Though they share several significant traits, they differ from one another as much as requirement differs from gift, as diagnosis does from cure, as bad news from good news. To confuse them leads all too often to confused faith. Yet we need them both, because law and gospel work hand in hand for our salvation.

As indicated, law and gospel do share several significant traits. For one, both were created by God—the same God. It is not as if some evil god created the law while some good and gracious God created the gospel. The church condemned such a notion already back in the first century, sticking by the ancient creed that confessed we have but one God, and one God only, who created all things. That "all" includes law and gospel.

Then, too, both law and gospel are about love. That surprises people. It shouldn't, since the God who created both is

love. Here, however, we can spot the difference between law and gospel—by observing where love is treated as requirement or as gift.

In the Commandments, God requires us to think and act always with love and in no other way. We could hardly expect otherwise since God is a God of love. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness.

You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's. These are examples of what love toward neighbor includes—or excludes—in practical everyday situations. By these Commandments the God of love erects a wall to protect us and all that is

Because we fail to love as God loves, the law "always accuses," to use Luther's phrase.

rightfully dear to us against the predatory actions of our neighbors. By that same wall, God seeks to protect our neighbors against predatory actions by us.

To induce us to act with love even when we don't want to, God attaches to the Commandments promises of all sorts of blessings as a reward for our obedience. Equally, God adds threats of dire punishment against all breaches of the Commandments.

When we consider how these promises alternately bribe and coerce our neighbors into doing so much good that they otherwise would not do, and into refraining from so much evil that they otherwise would do, we cannot help but see a gospel halo surrounding the Commandments. A God who did not love would not care what we sinners do to each other, or to ourselves. Clearly God's love inspired the giving of the Commandments. The content of the Commandments, however, remains law (requirement), not gospel (gift).

Since the law accomplishes so much good and is all about love, we might ask, "Why, then, is it bad news?" The answer is simple: because we don't love as God requires. Had God left it up to us to decide if and whom and how much we shall love, well, then the law might have struck us as good news. But God demands that we love God above all things, above life itself. And God demands that we love our neighbor, every neighbor—even the neighbor who is a hateful enemy—as much as we love ourselves and our own.

Because we fail to love as God loves, the law "always accuses," to use Luther's phrase. It always prosecutes us before God. The Commandments about love, filled with such wisdom and promises of good rewards, are transformed by our ill behavior into a closet full of damning skeletons and a courtroom full of dire judgments against us. Bad news!

The gospel, on the other hand, is good news. It, too, is about love, but rather than requiring that we love, it offers us God's love as an

undeserved gift.

If the gospel makes any demand, it makes the demand on God, not on us, requiring that God love us in spite of our failure to live according to the law. It requires that God do whatever is necessary to save us from the judgments we have incurred. As it turns out, this required God to send Jesus, the only begotten, to become one of us, fully vulnerable to the disasters sin inflicts, and to become a victim of our sins—all to save us.

The gospel is good news because it announces God's steadfast love for us in spite of our lovelessness. It is pure gift because by God's grace God refuses to deal with us as we deserve and instead rewards us because of the pure love Jesus performed in his living, dying and rising again for us. It is cure because it delivers us from all that we deserve by our shoddy performance of the law.

Both law and gospel are about love. Yet each is unique. God uses them both to lead us to salvation—but each according to its unique task.

God uses the law not only to show us what it means to love but also as a diagnostic tool to lay before us our prognosis based on our

behavior. Like a CAT scan that reveals a life-threatening cancer and the patient's need of a skilled surgeon, the law shows us our sin and our desperate need of a savior.

God uses the gospel to tell us that we have a Savior, that God has produced a cure for us through Jesus, God's chosen agent of salvation. In its strictest sense, the sense by which it is proclaimed throughout both Old and New Testaments, the gospel announces that God delivers us and accepts us by grace, that is, by God's undeserved mercy and forgiveness, by God's steadfast love.

God proclaims this gospel throughout both testaments because only through the gospel does the Spirit create in people the faith to accept God's salvation. This was true of Abraham and Sarah. It is true also of us.

Law and gospel—each distinct, yet they work hand in hand in God's plan for our salvation. By the law God prepares us for the gospel. By the gospel God saves us. Study them both. Thank God for both. **G**

The Rev. Daniel R. Burow recently retired after 20 years as a parish pastor and 19 years as an editor of church curriculum materials. He and his wife, Marcia Burow, live in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Glory and Grace

Daniel Erlander

Many years ago God was vexed with a nation called Egypt. Pharaoh, the ruler of this land, and his elites were brutally oppressing the slave people, the Hebrews. The creator of heaven and earth saw the Hebrews' misery and heard their cry (Exodus 2:23-25). In deep compassion God decided to call human partners to help with a liberation. God decided on a team of a sister and two brothers—Miriam, Aaron and Moses (Micah 6:4).

Had God asked for my advice, I might have recommended Miriam and Aaron, but never Moses. Instead of being a mature, law-abiding, articulate, and prominent member of the Hebrew slave community, Moses was a fugitive running from the Egyptian police. He was also very poor at public speaking. After having been raised in the royal palace, he had thrown away a dazzling future by killing an Egyptian taskmaster (Exodus 2:11-14).

Moses escaped to the land of Midian where he married Zipporah, whom he met while he was sitting by a well (Exodus 2:15-22). In this foreign land, the call of Moses happened one day while Moses, without

a religious thought in his mind, was watching his father-in-law's sheep at the foot of Mt. Horeb, also called Mt. Sinai. He noticed a bush with a flame in its center, a flame that was not consuming the bush. Very curious, Moses approached the bush.

Suddenly a voice came from the flame, "Moses, Moses." Realizing this was the voice of God, the fugi-



Cartoons by Daniel Erlander

tive shepherd stammered, "Here I am."

"Take off your sandals, for this is holy ground," the voice responded. Barefoot, Moses beheld the bush, the flame, the voice, the glory of God. Then, afraid he would die seeing the face of God, he hid his eyes (Exodus 3:1-6).

It was at this point a miracle happened—a grace moment. I

God's presence, before the blazing fire in the bush, Moses felt safe. He did not grovel but engaged the creator of the universe in conversation, even argument. The topic of thisondrous divine and human debate was God's plan to free the slave people. Moses had moved from worship to conversation about his vocation, from adoration to discussion about the shape of his future (Exodus 3:7-17).

God was pleased, deeply pleased. The creator of the universe, who hears the cry of the poor, had found a friend, a partner to join Miriam and Aaron in leading a

dream. A dream that a downtrodden slave people would go forth in freedom to bless all the families on earth (Genesis 12:1-3).

Years later Moses stood again on the holy ground at the foot of Mt. Horeb, also called Sinai. Beside him were Miriam and Aaron. Around them were God's precious people, God's holy nation. There, as the flame in the bush, a miracle happened—a grace moment. To the trembling people God gave a promise: "I am Yahweh your God..." There God reminded them of God's merciful act



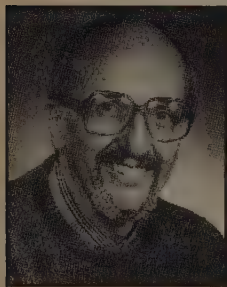
of liberation: bringing them out of the land of Egypt (Exodus 19:1—20:2). Then the loving Redeemer bestowed upon them a precious gift—the Ten Commandments, the beautiful covenant—life that beckons a people who have seen the awesome majesty and have heard the gracious word. As God once moved dear Moses from worship to vocation, now God sought to move this precious family from worship to vocation—to live as partner people, free people living a life of love toward God and neighbor (Exodus 20:1-21).

grand liberation. We marvel at the vulnerability of God, the divine emptying—God being present in a lowly bush speaking to a guilty sinner who was in hiding; God arguing, risking, even changing, all for the sake of a

On July 26, 1994, a rainy day in Anchorage, Alaska, my wife Karen and I entered the Museum of Art and History without a religious thought in our minds. Soon we found ourselves in a special exhibit,

"Heaven on Earth: Orthodox Treasures of Siberia and North America."

In a dimly lit room we were hushed by the sound and sights of Eastern Christianity. The music of the Russian liturgy entered our ears as we gazed upon icon after icon—Orthodox paintings of Christ and Mary, apostles and saints, Old and New Testament stories. Icons are sometimes called "windows into heaven" because through these paintings we gaze into the world of God. As I beheld these expressions of faith, I felt as if I, too, was on holy ground. I was given a small glimpse of the glory and the grace revealed to Moses through the flame in the bush. I was also given a small glimpse of the glory and the grace revealed to Israel at Sinai. With these ancestors in the faith, God was moving me to worship and then to love. I should have taken off my shoes. **G**



Daniel Erlander and his wife, Karen, live on Whidbey Island, Washington, where he does free-lance teaching,

cartooning, and writing and serves Trinity Lutheran Church in Freeland. A former campus pastor at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington, he is author of two books.

The

There is something about the Scripture that demands a mouth. I want someone who knows its stories to turn to another, even better to groups of others, and say, "Did you ever hear about the time that...?" or "Let me tell you the story of Abraham and Sarah who...."

This storytelling isn't just coincidental: it is the Holy Spirit's work. For generation upon countless generation, until recently interrupted, faith has been passed in just this way. Now it's time for families to do one of the things they do best—to start telling the stories again.

Luther, who spent most of his life translating and publishing Scripture, once said that it was too bad the Scripture was ever written down. At its heart, it is a story—a series of stories passed along for thousands of years, most often by people who couldn't read but who knew what they had been told well enough to say it again, themselves.

As wonderful as printing has been, something happens to words when they are locked onto pages. They lose the tone of voice, the warmth, the tenderness or the hard edge, the sarcastic spin that they can get from the tongue. Jesus said, "...it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). Our words literal

Word on Your Lips

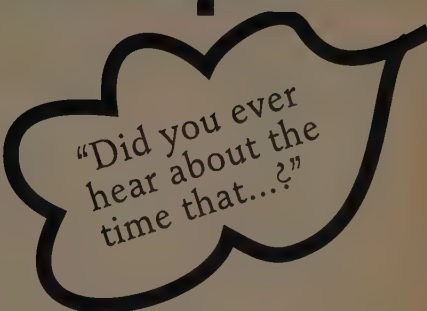
James Arne Nestingen

express us, putting us out to those who hear us.

This gives the oral word, the spoken story, an advantage over print. Of course, there is everything right about reading to children. But there is so much more when that someone who is telling the story knows it well enough to put the book away, to place the hands that held it on the child's arms, to let the story take over.

"Faith comes from what is heard," Paul writes in Romans 10:17. The Holy Spirit fills the word with the power necessary to make believers of us. But the Holy Spirit doesn't have anything against laps, laughter, some drama and imagination—whatever it takes to capture a heart. When you learn of Sarah or Hannah, of Tamar or Miriam, of Jacob or Peter, Mary Magdalene or Lydia, Paul and Silas and Eunice that way, how can you ever forget them? Better yet, how can you help but remember how God has cared for the sinful saints through all the generations?

Recently, television has taken over storytelling. Its stories are of quick victories, easy intimacies, readily solvable problems. There is no depth, no life—no knowledge of the deep things, precious little wisdom. And at the



"Did you ever hear about the time that...?"

beginning, middle and end, there is always that commercial, sellers trying to take their audience captive for their own purposes.

It's way better to do what generations have done before: speak the truth in love and tell the old, old story. We need to tell the stories, not just to the kids but to one another, and not just to one another, but to anyone who will listen. Families are good for stories. So are cafes, circle meetings, coffee parties.

When the Scripture finds a mouth, the Spirit is already at work. Faith will follow, just as sure as you know. **CG**

The Rev. James Arne Nestingen, popular writer, speaker and storyteller is professor of church history at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. He is the author of the 1995 Women of the ELCA Bible Study in LWT—The Hidden Promise: A Study of the Ten Commandments. Dr. Nestingen introduces each session of the Bible study with a story. Find the audiotape of these stories wrapped with the resource book. Order from Augsburg Fortress (Code number LT2-9525, \$5.50).

Jesus is Presented at the Temple

In keeping with Dr. Nestingen's emphasis on "telling the stories" (see p. 12), LWT asked three women from overseas to reflect on the story of Jesus' presentation at the temple, found in Luke 2:22-39. Here are their thoughts.

Through the Eyes of Simeon

Marta T. Kovacs

Simeon waited. He did not expect something for himself; he expected his nation's consolation. He was not alone with this—many Israelites waited for Israel's consolation and liberation.

The Sight of Simeon

Simeon, however, waited differently than the others in Jerusalem. He waited differently, and saw differently. Most at the temple, if they noticed at all, saw a law-abiding Jewish couple of modest means from Galilee—a religiously suspect area. They saw an ordinary child, one of a thousand.

But the extraordinary happened inside of Simeon; he glimpsed the divine presence in the midst of the ordinary. By the touch of the Spirit his inner world changed; he saw differently.

The Move of Simeon

Even though Simeon glimpsed the immense in the small, the holy in the ordinary, he dared to take the child—God—in his arms. A bold move.

Simeon's Salvation

Simeon's story makes it clear to us that salvation means nearness. Nearness of God. And as such, it is not a reward after death, but an opportunity already in this life.

As Simeon glimpsed the face of God in the face of the boy, Simeon knew that the promise had been fulfilled, and his eyes were seeing God's salvation. Simeon understood that God is near us, near indeed.

The Realism of Simeon

But the old man also knew that the King who dares to be so human, so close to us, will be rejected in this world. For this world wants a Messiah who turns stones into bread, who thrills us with his skills, and will come down from the cross. "And a sword will pierce through your own soul also"—says Simeon to Mary.

The Peace of Simeon

Simeon departs: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word...." The promise has been fulfilled. He not only saw, but enfolded in his arms, the messenger of the Almighty.

The Rev. Marta T. Kovacs of Vönöck, Hungary, serves three rural congregations in a joint ministry with her husband.



To See Jesus as Simeon Did

Sa Cheung Yim Ling

This morning was sunny and bright. I walked out of the city toward the mountain to smell the morning air and to pray. As usual, I prayed for God's salvation for my people. During my prayers the Lord promised me that I shall be able to see his anointed one before the end of my life. Urged by the Spirit, I hurriedly went to the temple.

I saw a couple bringing their firstborn to the temple to fulfill the Law's requirement. Could it be this baby is God's grace and salvation? Yes! As I held the child in my arms, it became clear. Praise God!

In this world full of crooked deeds and deceitful ways, I now finally see my Lord's salvation with my own eyes and hold in my arms God's wonderful love. I do wish this busy city could slow down its pace a bit and feel the difference.

Jesus came into the world of Simeon, and Jesus is in our world. Like Simeon, I wish this busy world would slow down its pace a bit and feel the difference. In order to avoid thinking too much about the fact that in our land a new government is coming to rule after June 30, 1997, people bury their heads under work and enjoyment, sparing no time for future and spiritual matters.

Competition and success are the keys to life in Hong Kong. Satan finds it easy to dominate Hong Kong by focusing people's minds on the fear of losing. People often look down upon a humble God, one who comes to the lowly ones who suffer. Sometimes I am also sorry to say that even Christians waste their lives and compete

for fame and success. May God have mercy on us. And may God help us see Jesus as Simeon does.

Isa Cheung Yim Ling is a graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary (Hong Kong) and works as a full-time evangelist.



Jesus at the Temple

Hannah Yambasu

Mary took her baby, Jesus, to the temple for presentation, as was the traditional Jewish custom (Luke 2:22-24). The presentation ceremony carried a double meaning, with both religious and traditional significance. By participating in the ceremony, Mary and her son could be identified with her people—the Jewish nation. The religious aspect in the presentation to the Lord in the temple is to give thanks and praise to God, and to ask for God's abundant blessings. At the presentation ceremony Mary gave back to God what God had given her, just as Hannah gave back to God her only child, Samuel (1 Samuel 1:21-24).

In Sierra Leone, when a child is born, a naming ceremony (called "outdooing") is performed by a pastor in the presence of parents, friends and relatives. The baby's name is announced by the pastor, who offers a special prayer for the baby and the family.

During this ceremony, the child and the mother are the focus. Traditionally, the occasion marks the child's first appearance to the general public. Friends and relatives of the child's family usually shower the baby and mother with gifts.

The spiritual context of the naming ceremony and its biblical meaning are generally eroding in our society. The ceremony often is regarded as only a social occasion. But we can imitate Hannah and Mary and be a role model to our children. We can value the ceremonies in our culture for their deep religious significance, as well as their social meaning. Like Mary and Hannah, we can ground our children in the faith with joy, thanksgiving, love, patience, prayer and hope. **CG**

Hannah Fatmata Yambasu is a lay preacher and works at Njala University, Freetown, Sierra Leone.



What Is Most Certainly True?

Susan Niemi

today's world of rapidly changing technology, new products and scientific advancements, what was true just yesterday might not be true today.

And if that's the case, what about the world of the 16th century? How much about it are we inclined to say is still *most certainly true*?

When Martin Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* in 1529, he used the phrase "This is most certainly true" to end his explanations to the three parts of the Apostles' Creed. The Creed and Luther's explanations to it make up one of the five parts of Luther's *Small Catechism*. The other four parts are the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

The last time you read or studied the *Catechism* may have been in confirmation class. If you didn't grow up Lutheran, perhaps you have never studied it. Whether you have never seen it, or studied it just recently as part of an adult education program, or as you do the 1995 Bible study in Lutheran Woman Today (which is based on the Ten Commandments), let's take a new look at what Luther wrote to address the basics of our faith.

Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* to be a teaching tool for households, so parents could explain the Christian faith to their children in simple terms. After traveling around Saxony (part of Germany), Luther was appalled at the lack of people's understanding of the basics of the Christian faith, so he prepared the *Small Catechism*. Never short on direct language, he wrote in the preface:

"The deplorable, wretched shortcomings that I recently encountered while I was a visitor has constrained and compelled me to prepare this catechism, or Christian instruction, in such a brief, plain, and simple version. Dear God, what misery I beheld! The ordinary person, especially in the villages, knows absolutely nothing about the Christian faith, and unfortunately many pastors are completely

**Luther wrote the
Small Catechism
to be a teaching
tool... so parents
could explain the
Christian faith to
children in
simple terms.**

unskilled and incompetent teachers. Yet they are all supposed to bear the name Christian, to be baptized, and to receive the Holy Sacrament, even though they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments! As a result they live like simple cattle or irrational pigs and, despite the fact that the gospel has returned, have mastered the fine art of misusing all their freedom.

About the same time that Luther wrote the *Small Catechism*, he also wrote the *Large Catechism*, which was designed for use by pastors. It contains additional explanations and helpful illustrations of biblical material. You might want to consider using it as a companion to your study of the *Small Catechism*.

Although the *Small Catechism* was written as a teaching tool, try giving it opportunity to speak as meditational or inspirational writing. One of my favorite parts is Luther's explanation to the Third Article of the Creed:

"I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith."

This explanation reminds me that the *Small Catechism* can be understood as an interpretation of the gospel. Along with the Bible, it interprets God's message of grace and provides me opportunity to reflect on my relationships with God, myself and my neighbors.

Luther's words have been translated from German many times over the past centuries, including again this past year. The quotations in this article are from a new contemporary translation, which is part of a larger translation that will appear in several years in a new edition of the *Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, forthcoming).

Whatever translation you use, and however the *Small Catechism* speaks to you, Luther's work helps us see that God's message of grace is, and always will be, "most certainly true." Thanks, Martin! **G**

Susan Niemi is director of product management for ELCA Resources at Augsburg Fortress in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



**Try giving the
Small Catechism
an opportunity
to speak as
meditational or
inspirational
writing.**

My father was a pharmacist, and he owned and ran a drugstore. In 1974, five days before Christmas, a robber

shot him in his neck. His spinal cord was partially crushed, and from that time on he was paralyzed below his shoulders. Though mentally sharp as ever, he was unable to work and became dependent on other people for meeting all his physical needs.

My Father was a Pharmacist

A couple of years after he was hurt, he said something that shocked me. "You know, I wouldn't want to trade places with most men my age (which was around 48). They have their careers together, and are probably making the most money they'll make in their lives. But their kids are growing older and more independent, their marriages may not be so good, and those men wonder deep inside whether their families love *them* or the nice lives they provide. I can't provide much for you kids anymore. But I don't need to wonder whether you love me. I wouldn't give that up for anything."

I've thought a lot about that conversation.

I can't provide much for you kids anymore. But I don't need to wonder whether you love me. I wouldn't give that up for anything."

Dad knew how much we cared for him—that's good. He lost so very much, but he was not destroyed by those losses—that's good. He had to change his way of understanding himself, and his way of valuing himself. Maybe that's good,

too, but it's scary. Before he was hurt, he was probably the busiest and most active person I've ever known, and he had to give up almost all of that. He could no longer measure himself by the

yearly dollar volume in the store, or how much fence got built in a day, or getting to the bottom of his list of errands. When everything else was taken away, loving and being loved were left.

My father had joined the church when I was two or three years old, and he was always a consistent but not especially passionate church member. His faith deepened after he got hurt; he talked about it, for one thing, and he settled into God's love in a different way. Lots of people looked at "that poor crippled man" and saw God's punishment. (Someone even asked me once, "What do you think he did to deserve that?") My dad didn't see it that way, though. "You know, God finds lots of ways to love us, especially when life is hard. I'm just thankful for the way God has blessed me."

My father died two years ago, and the last year of his life was one long medical struggle. He became ventilator-dependent after emergency

"You know, God finds lots of ways to love us, especially when life is hard. I'm just thankful for the way God has blessed me."

surgery, and then he fought his way off the machine after about four months. On one level, he was struggling

to live in a way that made sense to him; he was emphatic about not wanting to spend his life dependent on a machine. On another level, he was ready to take what came each day, sure that whether he lived or died, God was holding him.

I reflect on my father's life, especially the last 17 years of it, almost the way I reflect on Jesus' parables. I know there are some lessons here for me about God's love, and lots of questions without easy or obvious answers.

In the middle of pain, loss and grief, God's subtle and persistent love reached my father and mother, and us kids, in a variety of ways. So does the hurt come from God? Or is God just willing to work through whatever happens in our lives, losses as well as joys?

Sometimes people are destroyed by tragedy, rather than growing from it. Why is this? In part, people can choose to stay connected with what's happening and with the people in their lives. But sometimes people just fall apart. Why the difference?

This kind of growth is a good thing, but does it always have to come at such high cost? Does the tornado or flood have to destroy the town before a community really becomes a community? Are there other ways we can grow in faith without going through such chaos and agony?

Why is it sometimes difficult to be with the hurt person, the grieving person, the one who is dying? Do I sometimes feel, even if I don't think, that misfortune is contagious? Th

erson whose child or spouse has died unexpectedly is a reminder that life is unpredictable and that such things could happen to me. I'd rather not know that!

Is this why I sometimes look at the future with anxiety? I seek to put my trust in God no matter what. But I know bad things can happen, too. Can they separate me from God's love? St. Paul in Romans emphatically tells me "no" (8:35 and following), and when I consciously focus on this, the anxiety settles down. But why doesn't it go away completely?

I work hard at church, at my job, with my family. Would I still feel I belonged if I couldn't shape my identity by doing so much? Can I just be for a while, and not always do? Can I offer the same opportunity to other people, in or outside, the church? Can I be God's friend without feeling I always have to "prove myself"? Why am I so uneasy when I'm being served, and not actively serving?

Can I freely accept love from other people without making it conditional? Can I trust that people can care for me as I am, even when I can't do anything for them?

Some people saw my dad after he was hurt as unproductive, useless, empty. But I know what his "just being" meant to me and relished his love for all of us, as he saw two of his children marry and later enjoyed six grandchildren. The little kids would sit between his feet on his electric wheelchair and ride around the house, playing garbage truck. I remember how he helped me with plumbing repairs via long-distance telephone, and how he shared my satisfaction when the repairs succeeded—usually. How many sick, old, or disabled people are there

in our congregations and communities who have as much to give as my dad did, who are not seen as valuable?

When I look back at the way my dad changed, it looks like God's own grace in action, though I don't think it felt like grace to my dad, or to anybody around. What does grace feel like, after all? I expect it to seem like joy, contentment, harmony. Can grace sometimes come masked in confusion, fear or exhaustion? Or rather can those feelings accompany God's grace in action?

I think God makes a place for all of us, no matter where we are, to grow in the way my dad grew, to worry less about what we bring to God and to "just notice" the way God loves us, as we are, no matter what. **CG**

The author requests anonymity.

Introducing the 1995 Bible Study

Many of us recall hours in early adolescence spent memorizing Luther's *Small Catechism* in preparation for the public confirmation of our faith that we would one day make before our congregation. How our lives have changed since those days! We have matured, grown and learned so much.

The Hidden Promise: A Study of the Ten Commandments, the 1995 Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Bible study, is an opportunity to revisit the catechism—to examine again the Ten Commandments as God's Word of instruction for our lives. However, the study will also explore the many ways in which the Commandments are a promise to us as well. If a command asks us to do something to please God, the promise tells us that, through Jesus, we are already pleasing. This section uncovers the promise hidden in each commandment—the way God works in love on our behalf.

You will notice some changes in the study's format this year. Because the primary focus of the study is on the Ten Commandments, the commandment being studied each session will be listed as the study text, along with its biblical reference. In each session a biblical story will be explored as a way to walk through the issues of the commandment. Each session also contains a memory text that interprets the Commandments from a New Testament perspective, speaking to the heart of the session.

With the exception of the first two sessions, these are the elements of each session: "The Story," which explores the story behind each commandment; "The Command," which asks participants to hear the command in each commandment; "The Promise," which uncovers the hidden promise in each commandment; and "What does this mean?," which examines the meaning Luther found in each commandment. The first two sessions both focus on the First Commandment. Session 1 deals with the promise in the First Commandment, Session 2 with the command. These two sessions will give more attention to the concepts of command and promise as a way to create a common understanding for future sessions.

Martin Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* for use in the home, the first and most formative place where the seeds of our faith are sown and grow. His look at the Ten Commandments and ours over the coming months, will also seek to grow in us a faith and confidence in God's hidden promise.

The Hidden Promise

James Arne Nestingen

Study Text: Exodus 20:2-3

Story Text: Acts 15: 1-21

The First Commandment

I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods. Exodus 20:2-3). What does this mean? We are to fear, love and trust God above anything else.

Memory Text:

For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes (Romans 10:4).

Overview

In the death and resurrection of Jesus, God has set us free from all other powers that might lay claim to believers, including sin, death and the law. This is the promise of the gospel, hidden where everyone can see it in the opening words of the First Commandment.

Opening

O Lord, we pray that you will open our ears with the word of what you have done for us in Christ. Let us rest in the certainty of your promise, so that we can look to you for every good. And then, dear Lord, so anchor us in Christ that we can live by his grace, without having to fear the commandments. Amen.

The Story

What place do the Ten Commandments have in the life of faith? As obvious as some answers appear, the church has often had difficulty with this question. In fact, the apostles themselves got into an argument about it. They came to an agreement in the first Jerusalem Council, an assembly convened to settle the

issue. **Read Acts 15:1-21** to learn more about this council. The “certain individuals” referred to in verse 1 are not identified specifically. In verse 5, another group who apparently had a similar point of view are named as belonging to the “sect of the Pharisees.” Whoever these people were, both groups were certainly made up of Jews who had come to faith in Christ.

1. What was the objection of these two groups to the preaching of Paul and Barnabas—what did they believe was required in order to be saved (see verse 5)?

2. In verses 7-11, Peter made a speech replying to the objection of the two groups. What two things had happened to the Gentile believers who had heard the good news of the gospel (verses 8-9)?

What was necessary for salvation according to Peter’s preaching (verse 11)?

After Peter was finished speaking, Paul and Barnabas took the floor and told of some of the wondrous events that happened while they worked among the Gentiles (verse 12). Why all this fuss about the Gentiles? Remember that the Jews had a long history of staying separate from other people as a way of claiming their uniqueness as God’s chosen people. Because Gentiles did not keep Jewish law, the Jews saw them as unclean.

Acts 10 records a dream Peter had earlier that changed his attitude about this dramatically. In it God basically said to him, “Don’t call unclean what I call clean” (see Acts 10:15).

3. What made Peter, Paul and Barnabas so sure and ready to argue that God had now chosen to include Gentiles in the promise of salvation (verses 8-11)?

The final speaker, as Luke tells the story, was a man named James—probably the James referred to as the brother of Christ, who was one of the first important leaders of the church. Verses 14-20 trace the decision that was made to settle the conflict. In verse 14, James summed up the situation. Then, in verses 16-18, he quoted a prophecy to show that what had happened among the Gentile Christians was according to God's expressed intention. In verses 19-21 James announced his decision.

4. Compare verses 5, 10 and 19. What did James mean when he said the church “should not trouble” the Gentiles (verse 19)?

Did James decide in favor of Peter, Paul and Barnabas, or for the two groups?

In Romans 10:4, the memory text, we get to overhear what the apostle Paul actually said to some Gentiles—the believers gathered in Rome, the greatest city of the empire. The verse comes from a longer discussion (Romans 9-11) of the relationship between Christians and Jews.

5. How is Romans 10:4 consistent with James's decision?

What do you think this meant for the significance of the law of Moses for Gentile believers?

What does this say about the Ten Commandments?

The Promise

There is a pattern in Acts, in Romans, and in Paul's other letters: When the apostles spoke of the law of Moses (the Ten Commandments), they wouldn't deal with them without speaking first of the promise hidden behind the Commandments. They first speak of the promise of Christ—the gospel, the good news of God's love and salvation through Jesus Christ. They want to make sure that we know, from the beginning, that the law was not given to save us, and cannot. Salvation is Christ's work; Christ insists on doing it alone, without our help.

Luther followed the pattern of the apostles in both of his cat-

echisms: the *Small Catechism*, which many remember from confirmation classes, and the *Large Catechism*, which was written for pastors and teachers. In fact, Luther didn't have to look far into the Commandments for the gospel. He found the promise of Christ hidden in the very first words of the First Commandment: "I am the Lord your God."

"I AM" is the name God gave when Moses tried to find out who was calling out to him from the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). It is also the name Jesus set out when he pronounced God's promise: "I am," Jesus said. "I am the good shepherd," "I am the resurrection and the life," "I am the vine" (John 10:11; 11:25; 15:5).

Only God can claim this name. About us it will sometime be said, "She was," or, "He always hoped to be." But God is, was and always will be. The names Lord and God are synonyms for the "I AM." God is. And as God is, God is the one who holds in hand all of life: past, present, future; every thing and every moment.

6. This kind of name, "I AM," is focused on what God does—the verbs or action words about God are the most important. Look over Luther's explanations of the three articles of the Apostles' Creed and name some things Luther said God does (see page 29). What do they tell you about God?

The word in the first sentence (also known as the prologue of the First Commandment that turns it from command to promise is **yours**. Someone or something that is yours belongs to you as a possession. When God says, "I am yours," God creates a relationship with you. "I belong to you," God says, "I pledge myself to you." God first made this promise to you when you were baptized. Whenever you hear the gospel, God renews this commitment to you.

When God is yours, everything that God is and has belongs to you. Life, forgiveness, the resurrection—nothing is held back. For God is the one who creates out of nothing, raises the dead and brings in the future. And God has promised to be yours without qualification or reservation. "I am the Lord your God," God says. It is just as simple as that. It's a promise that will be kept.

7. Most close relationships of life—marriage or deep friendship, for example—are based on promises rather than contracts. How is a contract different from a promise?

What makes these promises work?

How is God's promise similar to these promises? How is it different?

What does this mean?

Promises and faith go together. In fact, faith is simply believing that the promise is true, for you. But if faith is simple, it is never easy. Just as God sent the Holy Spirit to make believers of the Gentiles (reported in Acts 15), so God sends the Spirit to us, making us people of faith so we can live in the freedom of grace.

8. In Romans 10:5-8, 17 (verses surrounding the memory verse), Paul contrasted the law (which he called the law of Moses) and the gospel (Christ's word). "Faith comes from what is heard," he said (verse 17). Compare Paul's idea of faith's source with Luther's explanation of the third Article of the Apostles' Creed (see page 29). According to Luther's explanation, how does faith happen?

The "word" or the "gospel" to which Paul and Luther refer is the promise of Christ, hidden in the First Commandment and set out plainly in the gifts of Christ—forgiveness, peace, love and so forth. When this promise is spoken to you, the Holy Spirit is at work in it to make a believer out of you—to "keep you in true faith," as the catechism says.

The promise does not just mean faith, as though it were something you had to look up or find. Under the power of the Spirit, whether among the Gentiles in Acts or among the people in your study group, the gospel gives faith. When the Holy Spirit gets a good grip on our hearts through the promise, faith percolates through every aspect of life. Like hope and love, it boils up into all of our relationships—with God and with our neighbors.

Because you are being held by the Spirit, you can count on God to help you in every time of need, expect God's forgiveness and live in the confidence of the resurrection.

When the Spirit takes hold through the promise, relationships with neighbors change, too. Gripped by Christ's love, a person naturally wants to cherish the family, help people with their physical needs, be a true friend and so forth. That's just the way it works.

9. When you "really have your heart in it," as the saying goes, whatever you do goes a lot better. How does Christ "get our hearts in it?"

When the Spirit is at work in it, the First Commandment is also really the last commandment. For the Spirit brings home the promise, and then everything else in the Ten Commandments follows just as naturally as warmth follows fire. Making rules for faith is like telling a happy child to enjoy life. Faith doesn't need any rules or regulations. Freely, joyfully, it does without the law what the law can merely demand or require. This doing freely and joyfully becomes our righteousness, a righteousness that is God's gift to us through Christ (see Romans 10:4).

10. If faith works so freely, why talk about the Commandments? When do we need them?

Looking Ahead

The First Commandment is a promise, but it is also a command—the most difficult of all. With the very words "I am yours," God demands our fear, love and trust. For sinners, nothing could be more demanding.

About the author: The Rev. James A. Nestingen is a popular speaker and author of several books on Lutheran theology. He has developed a reputation as a gifted storyteller whose messages get to the heart of Luther's teachings. Dr. Nestingen is a professor of church history at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Hidden Promise: A Study of the Ten Commandments was prepared by Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America under the direction of the Rev. Karen Battle, Director of Educational Resources. Catherine Malotky and Betty Christiansen, editors. Copyright © 1999 Augsburg Fortress. May not be reproduced without permission.

For help with questions 6 and 8:

The Small Catechism and the Apostle's Creed

The First Article:

On Creation

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

What is this?

Answer: I believe that God has created me together with all creatures. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties. In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property—along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. God does all this out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all! For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.

The Second Article:

On Redemption

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.*

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

What is this?

Answer: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the father in eternity, and also true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. He has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules in eternity. This is most certainly true.

The Third Article:

On Being Made Holy

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.*

(continued on page 30)

What is this?

Answer: I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith. Daily in

this Christian church the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins—mine and those of all believers. On the last day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

From *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism*, © 1994 Augsburg Fortress. Used with permission. This 80-page book may be purchased from Augsburg Fortress (\$5.95, Order No. LT15-5305).

Supplementary Resources Available

The monthly study sessions of the Women of the ELCA Bible study—*The Hidden Promise*—are found only in the 1995 issues of *Lutheran Woman Today*. The study is complemented by these resources:

- 1) a **Leader Guide** (Code No. LT2-9526, \$4.25), order one for each leader;
- 2) a **Resource Book** with helpful background information and reading (Code No. LT2-9525, \$5.50), order for individuals as interested—comes with free accompanying **audiocassette** that features study writer Nestingen introducing each session with a story.

Other supplementary resources include:

a **Pocket Calendar** (Code No. LT2-9512, \$1.95 each; \$19.95 for 12);

Daily Bible Readings (Code No. LT2-9538, \$2.25 for 12; \$15.75 for 100); and an **Introductory Video**, narrated by the author, that introduces the study and its resources. Purchase the video, and receive a coupon for two free resource books with the purchase of five or more resource books (Code No. LT2-9424, \$9.95).

A copy of Luther's **The Small Catechism** also will assist your study (Code No. LT15-6733, 80 cents each).

Purchase supplemental items through your nearest Augsburg Fortress location, or call 1-800-328-4648. •

The Benediction



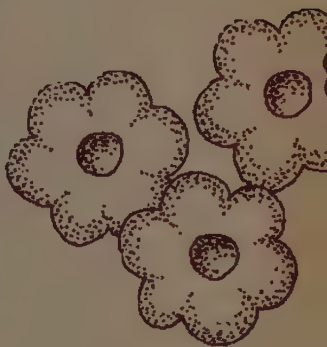
Marj Leegard

The day before the wedding I was doing some last-minute cleaning in the entryway when our daughter came out and sat down on the step. She motioned for me to sit beside her. As I shut off the vacuum cleaner I muttered to myself, "Surely she is not going to change her mind when I have baked a zillion tiny cookies. Or can it be that she wants to know something more about sex and I have little knowledge and even less willingness to discuss it further?" I sat down beside her.

"Mom," she said, "I don't want to tell you good-bye tomorrow night. I don't want to leave for my new home crying and I don't want to tell Daddy that I don't want to tell him good-bye. Will you promise not to come after us as we leave? Just let us slip away." I promised and we did our crying ahead of time. We were happy. We loved our daughter's choice. But we were sad because the time had gone too swiftly from little girl to grown-up. I went back to my preparations.

The wedding day was cold. Thirty degrees below zero—actual temperature, not wind chill. The wedding was just as she and Joe had planned, a Christmas wedding with bridesmaids in red velvet, decorated Christmas trees and a Norwegian buffet.

As the bride and groom were walking toward the door, Jerome said, "Let's go home." We knew Laurie and Joe planned to change clothes at our house, so we could catch them there. My desire for one more hug overcame my promises and I followed my husband to the cloak room. People stopped us. "Such a nice couple." "It was a beautiful wed-



ding." "My, we watched them grow up together." "Storybook romance. They never did go with anyone else, did they?" We said, "Yes, yes, yes and no" and finally began putting on scarves and caps and coats and overshoes and mittens, but then got stopped in our bundled-up condition.

*What a wonderful
benediction thankfulness
is at the close of the day or
of a part of life.*



People wanted to discuss how lovely the wedding cake was and did we have the recipe for those almond rusk things?

We finally made it out to the car and the starter ground away with no enthusiasm and very little spark. On about the 15th grind the car started and we drove home. There was no

car in the yard. There were two girls helping with the cleaning up. Jerome asked, "Have they been here?" and the girls said, "Yes." Jerome said, "Did they say anything?" "No."

Then the plaintive question, "Didn't they say goodbye?" The girls smiled and nodded. Jerome persisted, "Did they say to tell us anything?" and the girls said, "No."

We were soon alone. More alone than we had been in the 36 years of having a child or two in the house. Laurie's wedding dress was on her bed. Joe's tux was hanging on the bathroom door. Jerome went to bed and when I came he was way over on the far side. Usually he took his two-thirds right in the middle and threw spread and blankets in all directions. The spread had not been disturbed. He was a lonely father of the bride with his face turned toward the wall. I turned the spread back on my side and there was a piece of paper. I turned the light on and read it aloud. "Dear Mom and Dad," it said, "Thank you for 20 beautiful years. I love you. Laurie."

Jerome sat up and said, "Do we have anything in the house to eat beside wedding cookies? I am hungry."

We would have been as good parents as we could be without Laurie's gratitude, just as God is good to us without our thanks. But what a wonderful benediction thankfulness is at the close of the day or of a part of life. *Thank you for the beautiful years.* If our hearts help us remember the joy of that benediction for us we will give it more often to God and our families. **C**



LWT columnist Marj Leegard, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, is a retired farmer and active writer and speaker.

CEDAW: The Women's Convention

the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.—from the preamble of the Convention. In U.N. language the word “convention” means “treaty.”

On December 18, 1979, the United Nations (U.N.) adopted the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**. The CEDAW (also known as the Women's Convention) is the central and most comprehensive document emerging from the 30 years of work by the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, a body established in 1946 to monitor the situation of women worldwide, and to promote women's rights. As this issue of LWT went to press, more than 130 nations have ratified the CEDAW. The United States is not one of them.

Before the U.N. adoption of the Women's Convention, there was no legally binding treaty that took an international view of a woman's rights within the family and within the political, economic and social life of their country. The CEDAW upholds basic rights such as the right to vote; to have equal access to education, employment and health care; and to enter freely into marriage.

The convention reinforces the definition of discrimination against women so that those who would discriminate on the basis of sex can no longer claim that no clear definition exists.

The United States participated in drafting the CEDAW and signed it on July 17, 1980, indicating the U.S. intention to ratify. Advocates for the convention hope the U.S. will ratify it prior to the September 1995 World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing, China. As violence against women intensifies in many countries, it is crucial for our country to signal its support for human rights, including those for women. Many women in all parts of the world are oppressed because of their gender. Either they have no rights or insufficient protection of their rights under law. United States ratification would mean that the U.S. could join the United Nations committee that monitors progress reports on treatment of women from the countries that have ratified CEDAW.

Please contact the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs for an update on the process of ratification and advocacy needed.

Mark B. Brown
Lutheran Office for
Governmental Affairs
122 C Street NW, Suite 125
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 783-7507 **A**

Lutherans Respond to AIDS

Simple Tasks, Big Differences

Debra Illingworth Greene

Ruth Richards makes the life of one family grappling with AIDS a little bit easier. A few times each month Richards baby-sits two young brothers who are HIV-positive. Both parents have AIDS. "I told her to call me whenever she needs me," Richards said of the boys' mother.

Richards participates in Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at Lake Edge Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin. A television program about children with AIDS inspired her. She said the older boy, who is about two years old, reminds her of the children she saw on that program several years ago.

"When he has a good day, he's fine. He smiles a lot," she explained. "When he has a bad day, he cries all the time and has to be held. That makes the younger one jealous. It's a challenge to keep them both happy."

As AIDS makes a deeper and uglier mark on this world, caring people will be in high demand.

Richards' volunteer work is just one example of how Lutherans are responding to the AIDS crisis. From delivering groceries to holding babies with AIDS, Lutherans across the

United States are volunteering for simple tasks that make a big difference. And more help is needed. The World Health Organization estimates that more than one million people in North America have been infected by HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS. The organization estimates there are more than 2.5 million cumulative cases of AIDS worldwide.

The World Health Organization also notes that HIV is being transmitted increasingly through heterosexual contact in North America.

"In the next five years, most of us feel that the face of HIV

ing to change dramatically for churches," said the Rev. Robert Voss, pastor of Lake Edge Lutheran Church. "The myth that it's a gay disease is so prevalent. But that will change."

Voss is involved in both synodical and regional efforts to deal with AIDS. "Our role has been to be proactive so that churches are ready" when they no longer can ignore the disease, he said.

In Voss's synod, the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, 10 pastors are on call always to provide pastoral care for people with HIV and AIDS. The synod also has an AIDS resource library. At the regional level, a prayer service for World AIDS Day was produced (see December 1994 LWT) and a conference planned for the spring.

At the congregational level, most efforts are kept simple.

"It's small. It's simple. But it's effective," says the Rev. Michael Pozar of his congregation's involvement. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Pacifica, California, is a satellite food distribution site for a county agency that works with people with AIDS.

"They bring us a load of groceries every Tuesday morning. When members distribute those to 15 families and individuals with AIDS," Pozar said.

Holy Cross has delivered the groceries for more than a year now. During that time, approximately 15 volunteers have donated one

hour each week of their time. Some volunteers also fill special requests, like the time a man with AIDS in a nursing home asked that someone read the Bible to him.

Pozar advises congregations and women's groups to research the needs in their area before deciding how to help people with AIDS. "Don't decide what you want to do first," he said. Along with serving Holy Cross, Pozar heads up the Lutheran AIDS Network, which connects Lutherans across the United States who are working on AIDS issues.

Churches in big cities—where many agencies already work with people with AIDS—might find different needs. In San Francisco, St. Paulus Lutheran Church tries to build community with its Friendship Banquets.

Every Wednesday afternoon St. Paulus turns into an intimate cafe, where linens and flowers grace small, round tables, and dinner music plays in the background. Tom Cantrell, who coordinates the banquets, calls it a "time out" for low-income residents of the neighborhood who are HIV-positive or have AIDS. "We make it a small intimate atmosphere, like a cafe, where they're welcomed and treated very nicely," Cantrell said.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than one million people in North America have been infected by HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS.

"This is a chance for the guests to get together and meet other people. They tend to live in isolation," he said. "I'm trying to get them into some kind of community."

Banquet guests are served a nutritious, home-cooked meal by volunteers who come from local businesses, civic organizations and Lutheran congregations. All the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations in San Francisco are involved, Cantrell said.

Each week eight volunteers buy, prepare and serve the food to the guests, ranging in number from 25 to 40. Cantrell said that groups of volunteers come on a regular basis, so guests can develop relationships with the volunteers. "This community-building

"We clean house, hold hands, cook meals—anything that doesn't involve medical care" says DeAnn Ellisor, team leader.

aspect is as important as the food," he said. "The guests are learning that there are people out there who care about them. A lot of our guests have not been treated well by churches...it's important that the church is being welcoming in a concrete way."

The Friendship Banquets began in July 1991. As of August 1994, 39 volunteers had served 3381 meals to 621 individuals at 118 banquets.

Members of Lord of Love Lutheran Church, Omaha, Nebraska, didn't have to go out and research the needs of people with AIDS. They could ask their fellow members. Several years ago a married couple in the congregation was stricken with AIDS. The couple was open about their illness and the congregation responded.

Harry Naasz, a member of Lord of Life, said member designed a poster and bulletin insert telling the couple's story. "The point of the poster was that it didn't matter how they got (AIDS)," Naasz said. The poster was later distributed at the Nebraska Synod assembly and through the Lutheran AIDS Network.

The woman is still living, but her husband died in 1993 at Easter time. "It was quite a powerful Easter for everyone," said Naasz.

Members also volunteer for the Nebraska AIDS project. They grocery shop for people with AIDS, clean house and help out with transportation. "People spend a lot of time together going to movies and going out to dinner," Naasz said.

Lord of Love also has a line item in the congregations' budget for Naasz to use in emergencies. Naasz is a case manager in an HIV clinic at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. "Many of the people (I work with) are poor and there is not discretionary income," he said.

Other ways Lord of Love members have helped: "The quilters have given me quilts to give to people," Naasz said. "For one person that was his only Christmas present. The women in the church also bake for support group meetings.

"It's simple stuff, but it's powerful in its simplicity," he said.

Members of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Columbia, South Carolina, also assist people with AIDS in various aspects of their

daily life. The congregation started a 14-member AIDS Care Team two years ago. "We clean house, hold hands, cook meals—anything that doesn't involve medical care," said DeAnn Ellisor, team leader.

The entire team works with a client/friend and each team member sees the friend two to four times each month. "When it gets bad there's usually someone who visits every day," Ellisor said.

Each team member receives one day of intensive training before meeting with a friend. If a volunteer would like to be active previous to the training, they can volunteer by preparing a meal and having someone else deliver it, Ellisor said.

The AIDS Care Team has cared for five friends so far—three of them have died. Ellisor said the team works through social service entities, hospitals and physicians to identify people to care for.

Ellisor said the project isn't much work if it's organized properly and enough people are involved. "It can be very emotional," she said. "We have a wonderful pastor who has led us through the hard times. You couldn't put into words what we've learned from this."

Ruth Richards, the baby-sitter in Madison, Wisconsin, has learned a lot from her experience, too. But don't call her a saint. "I'm just a caring person," she said.

As AIDS makes a deeper and uglier mark on this world, caring people will be in high demand.

For more ways to learn about AIDS and to help people with AIDS, see the list of resources printed in the December 1994 issue of LWT. **AC**

Debra Illingworth Greene is a free-lance writer who lives in Madison, Wisconsin, with her husband Jeff and their brand-new baby, Ogden Riley.

From delivering groceries to holding babies with AIDS, Lutherans across the United States are volunteering for simple tasks that make a big difference.

The 1995 Budget; the 1993 Audit

In February, Women of the ELCA begins the new fiscal year. So it is an appropriate time to look at our 1995 budget—for those interested in seeing how Women of the ELCA uses the contributions it receives from a variety of sources.

The two pie charts on the next page illustrate the sources of income and the budgeted expenses for the churchwide organization of Women of the ELCA, and provide general budget information about 1995.

A budget is a plan. We begin developing our budget by looking at the organization's mission statement and at the goals set by the Executive Board. How will we carry out our ministries? What are the needs? What are the goals for programs and resource development for the next year? The budget is part of the resulting plan of action. The budget is presented to the Executive Board (or the Triennial Convention every three years) for review and approval, and once it is approved the staff begins to put that budget to work.

The churchwide Women of the ELCA budget for 1995 is \$4,024,100. Where does our income come from? As the chart shows, the largest part of the churchwide organization income comes from regular offerings and thankofferings. Regular offerings are given by women in congregational units. The units send part of this income to the synodical organizations which, in turn, use part for their expenses and send part to the churchwide organization. For 1995, it is estimated that regular offerings will represent 34 percent of the churchwide income.

Participants collect and give thankofferings to the congregational units, which send them directly to the churchwide organization. For 1995, it is estimated that thankofferings will represent 41 percent of the churchwide income.

Other major sources of income are designated gifts for Women of the ELCA ministries and ELCA ministries, and endowment and investment income.

The major item in budgeted expenses every year is program. This includes all events, activities and resources developed and sponsored by the churchwide organization and the staff costs for these. Program means all our activities and resources related to the triennial emphasis of "Women and Children in Poverty," our leadership development program, the "Witness of Women" program, training events and consultations, editorial services for Lutheran Woman Today, other resources such as Women of the ELCA Interchange and the Resource Packet, Bible studies, peace with justice and literacy resources, and the developmental costs for new programs and resources. In 1995, program costs are expected to represent 42 percent of the budget.

The second major category in the 1995 expense budget will be the Women of the ELCA "Gift to the Church," as it is officially called. This gift, budgeted at \$1,100,000, will represent 27 percent of the 1995 budget. The Gift to the Church supports programs and activities throughout the larger church, including designated ELCA ministries.

◆◆ Women of the ELCA

Administrative costs are estimated at 13 percent of the expense budget. This category covers salaries and benefits for the general administration staff, postage, supplies, equipment and general services to the organization. Here are dollars that pay for such important everyday things as postage and telephone calls, stationery, file folders and paper clips, and for administration of the organization's finances. Another important category of expenses here is support for ecumenical programs and organizations such as Church Women United and cooperation with other ELCA units on joint projects.

The portion of the budget titled "Governance" supports the work of the churchwide Executive Board.

This budget line pays for a minimum of two board meetings a year, for the churchwide president's travel, and for travel of the president's representatives to all synodical conventions and regional gatherings.

Grants and scholarships are another important budget category. The money used to fund this category comes from income from endowment funds established by women of faith and vision. Since 1990, we have granted more than \$643,475 to programs and agencies that work to alleviate the situation of women and children living in poverty and to carry out the ministries of the church here and abroad. In the same period, the organization has granted \$121,680 in scholarships to women who are continuing their educations.

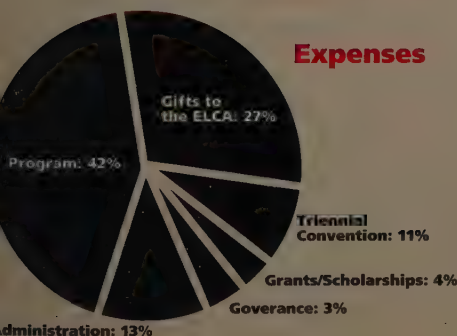
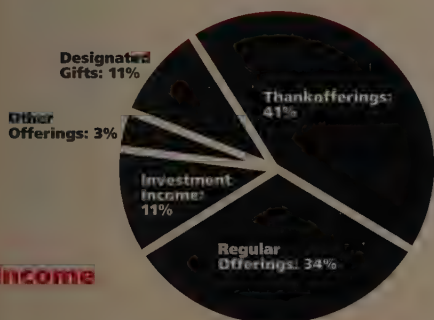
The last category in the 1995 expense budget is the triennial convention. These funds are reserved to help pay the constitutionally mandated costs of the 1996 convention.

While the budget is a plan, the plan can only be approximate, for an organization dependent on contributions cannot know for any set time period what its income will be. This is especially true for our organization, since we traditionally receive 60 percent of the year's income in December and January.

If you have questions about this budget, or about other aspects of Women of the ELCA financial planning, please direct them to me or to Jonathan Kalkwarf, our Director for Finance and Administration, (1-800-638-3522, ext. 2728).

Charlotte E. Fiechter
Executive Director
Women of the ELCA

Women of the ELCA 1995 Budget: \$4,024,100



FINANCIAL REPORT

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
for the twelve months Ending January 31, 1994

1993 Revenue/Support and Expenditures

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	Budget	Actual
OFFERINGS		
Regular Offerings	1,335,000	1,261,849
Thankofferings	1,610,000	1,572,243
Designated Gifts	405,000	449,096
Fifth Birthday Offerings	25,000	44,914
Synodical Women's Organization		
Convention Offerings	20,000	54,922
Other Offerings	50,000	79,723
TOTAL OFFERINGS	3,445,000	3,462,747
Triennial Convention	442,670	488,000
	3,887,670	3,950,747
Investment/Other Income	452,511	782,694
TOTAL REVENUE/SUPPORT	4,340,181	4,733,441
EXPENDITURES		
Mission Growth	794,037	777,748
Mission Action	360,137	418,158
Mission Community	359,171	327,261
Grants and Scholarships	155,293	125,949
Gift to the ELCA	1,000,000	1,067,400
Governance	114,500	92,363
Triennial Convention	1,157,205	1,200,277
Administrative Costs	457,374	448,773
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	4,397,717	4,457,929
DESIGNATED/RESTRICTED FUNDS		
Other Expenditures		66,245
Net Increase (Decrease) in all Other Funds	(57,536)	209,267
	(57,536)	275,512
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AND FUND RESTRICTIONS	4,340,181	4,733,441
Planned Giving Program	100,000	56,108

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

BALANCE SHEET

January 31, 1994 with comparative figures as of January 31, 1993

	General Operating and Other Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds and Funds Functioning as Endowment Funds	Total all Funds	
			1994	1993
ASSETS				
Cash and cash				
equivalents	50,300		50,300	50,300
Investments		3,969,231	3,969,231	3,720,159
Account				
receivable				
and other assets	11,180		11,180	17,483
due from the				
ELCA	1,414,330		1,414,330	1,378,178
Furniture and equip-				
ment (net of accum-				
ulated depreciation of				
\$69,952 and \$51,000				
in 1994 and 1993,				
respectively)	34,780		34,780	43,637
TOTAL ASSETS	1,510,590	3,969,231	5,479,821	5,209,757

LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES

Accounts payable and				
accrued				
liabilities	202,563		202,563	85,658
TOTAL				
LIABILITIES	202,563		202,563	85,658

FUND BALANCES

Unrestricted:				
Undesignated				
General				
operating fund	489,827		489,827	491,300
Unexpended				
endowment income				
and principal		469,842	469,842	444,156
Net investment in				
furniture				
and equipment:	34,780		34,780	43,637

Women of the ELCA ♦♦

General	Endowment			
	Operating and	Funds and Funds		
	Other Restricted Funds	Functioning as Endowment Funds	Total all Funds 1994	1993
Designated Triennial Convention	113,739		113,739	304,432
Unexpended endowment income and principal	213,704	2,206,178	2,419,882	2,204,833
Designated offerings carryover	300,872		300,872	214,416
Restricted:				
Unexpended endowment income and principal	153,278	1,293,211	1,446,489	1,369,439
Care of creation conference	1,418		1,418	6,000
Women in development	409		409	886
Multicultural event			0	45,000
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	1,308,027	3,969,231	5,277,258	5,124,095
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES	1,510,590	3,969,231	5,479,821	5,209,755

Why the 1993 Audit?

The audit printed on pages 40-42 is for the 1993 fiscal year, which ended on January 31, 1994. Because of the auditing process and LWT production schedules, by the time the 1993 audit appears in the magazine (as constitutionally mandated), we are nearing the end of the 1994 fiscal year. The article beginning on page 38 looks ahead to the anticipated 1995 budget for Women of the ELCA.

LWT 1994 Index

	Author	Issue	Page
--	--------	-------	------

FILE STUDY

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM

STUDY OF HEBREWS

al View of the			
ne Unshakable Kingdom", A	D.J. Hetland	Jan.	23
erview with the Koesters, An	L. Gedde	Jan.	26
tination: The Unshakable			
ngdom	C. /N. Koester	Jan.	28
shakable Kingdom:			
Study of Hebrews, The	C. /N. Koester	Jan.	29
at Salvation, The	C. /N. Koester	Feb.	26
Are God's House	C. /N. Koester	Mar.	25
's Promise of Rest	C. /N. Koester	Apr.	16
ist the Source of Salvation	C. /N. Koester	May	25
hor of the Soul, The	C. /N. Koester	June	24
Lives for Us	C. /N. Koester	Jul./Aug.	45
y Places	C. /N. Koester	Jul./Aug.	52
ce for All	C. /N. Koester	Sept.	28
rimage of Faith	C. /N. Koester	Oct.	23
aning the Race	C. /N. Koester	Nov.	21
erday, Today, and Forever	C. /N. Koester	Dec.	17

EVER MEDITATION

y Rest	S. Edison-Swift	Apr.	*
Saying Yes to God	T. Schroeder	May	*
voke One Another	S. Edison-Swift	Sept.	*
and Down the Mountain	S. Edison-Swift	Feb.	*
come the New Year	B. Karnop	Jan.	*

THE CHURCH

firmation: Preparation for			
Life-long Faith	L.K. Schafer	June	39
adamentals & Fundamentalism,			
ne	M.E. Marty	June	10
eat Investment, A	J.L. Wehrspann	Mar.	48
eping the Door Open	J.R. Smith	Jan.	14
rturing Adults in the Faith	K. Sandmaier	June	36

CHURCH SEASONS

vent Hospitality: Prepare			
Place	J.W. Halverson	Dec.	9
Love Made Bold	J. Barbati	Apr.	49
ster Rest	L.A. Gedde	Apr.	11
aders Share Stories:			
ospitality and Christmas	M.S. Sgarioto	Dec.	34
remembering Lent	M.E. Larson	Feb.	8

*= Inside front cover

Title	Author	Issue	Page
COMMUNITY			
Blessing Returned, A	F.O. Hanson	Nov.	32
By Faith: More Stories by Readers	A. Harrington	Nov.	37
By Faith: Readers Tell Their Stories	A. Harrington	Oct.	7
Confessing Together	P.J. Lull	Mar.	14
Defining Hospitality	W. Bullock	Dec.	3
Flowers for the Bishop	K.R. Johnson	June	17
Journey of the Chocolate Bunnies	B.S. Dimmitt	Mar.	40
Night the Lights Went Out In Lindy, The	J. Eckmann	Mar.	43
Orders for the Day: Mutual Consolation and Grace	M.A. Moller-Gunderson	Sept.	9
Power of Community, The	I. Christiansen	Sept.	22
Provoking One Another	A.R. Anderson	Sept.	34
Reader Asks...Share With Us Your Humanness, A		Nov.	2
Stand Together		Nov.	18
Valleys and Mountains of Faith, The	M. Robinson	Feb.	12
Visiting Faith	D.P. Schroder	Jan.	40
DEVOTION			
Apostles and Disciples	S.P. Gerhard	Oct.	48
Hurdles	G.A. Starr	Nov.	48
It Came Upon an Interstate...	B. Crammer	Dec.	14
Provoked by Pain	C.J. Mickelson	Sept.	48
Rain of the Holy Spirit, The	M.E.F. Albing	June	47
Truly Worthy Poor, The	R.D. Lupton	Jul/Aug.	64
GIVE US THIS DAY			
Big Snow and the Birthday, The	M. Leegard	Nov.	27
By Faith	M. Leegard	Oct.	40
Elsie's Story	M. Leegard	May	48
Is There a Difference Between Poverty and Poor?	M. Leegard	Jul/Aug.	41
Kindness and Beauty			
Rampant in the World	M. Leegard	Sept.	26
Nellie's Cookies	M. Leegard	June	31
New Math	M. Leegard	Apr.	42
Tell the Story	M. Leegard	Dec.	16
Tribute, The	M. Leegard	Mar.	31
GLOBAL			
What is the Quality of Our Christian Hope?	C.H. Grumm	June	6
Bonjour, Madame	M. Lindberg	Dec.	42
Finding Welcome in Lebanon	J. Dennison	Feb.	21
Global Hospitality	S. Edison-Swift	Dec.	44
Henowe Lecow!	N.C. Everist	Mar.	8

Title	Author	Issue	Page
... of a Roof of Our Own, The	C. Trigo de Breiding, M. Luz Chirinos	Jul./Aug.	35
...spitality Tanzanian-Style	M.J. Maass	Dec.	48
...herans in Russia:	R.K. Nice	Oct.	11
...ebuilding in Faith	A.B. Thiemann	Oct.	14
...hways of Faith	K.J. Yu	Jan.	1
...d Beans for New Years			

HEALTH/HEALING

...ar Not!	D.H. Smith	Dec.	11
...w to Paint the Rest of			
...y Life?	D. Holmstrup	Nov.	33
...urney Into Yes	L. Teeple	May	19
...escription for Fatigue	P.L. Schmidt	Apr.	26

MISSION/MINISTRIES

...m Ohio, With Love	J. Dennison	Sept.	15
...spitality in Dying	A.S. Resmer	Dec.	30
...spitality is...	I.M. Schwarzkopf	Dec.	39
...eracy...Aliteracy	F. Fretheim	Jan.	38
...Being an Irritant	J. Martensen	Sept.	24
...son Ministry: Cookies-Plus	J.M. Minor	Jul./Aug.	20

...fugee Ministry: Holy			
...rovocation to Hospitality	L. Wu	Sept.	18
...rld AIDS Day: Welcome			
...e Sick	D.I. Greene	Dec.	28

PARENTING/FAMILY

...gel Food	D. Richardson	Jan.	22
...thtub theology, mealtime			
...atrol	L. Rosin	June	18
...hortation in the Family	L. Rosin	Mar.	16
...mily Matters: Baptism—			
...Basic and a Unifier	M.M. Belisle	June	21
...mily Matters: Joining the			
...amily: Baptism Day	M.S. Sgarioto	May	24
...mily Matters: Rest With Me	D. Streufert	Apr.	29
...irloom of Faith	L. Rosin	Nov.	16
...tle Exhorters	FR. Coddington	Mar.	19
...arigolds Are Miracles	L.B. Champion	Mar.	39
...ll 'Em We're Coming When			
...ou Get There!	FR. Coddington	Mar.	24

PERSONAL/SPIRITUAL GROWTH

...alendar Art		Apr.	24
...mily Basics	M. Abrahamson	June	22
...discipline: It's About Do	J.K. Regal	Nov.	8
...n't Just Do Something, Stand			
...here!	M.R. Schramm	Apr.	5

Title	Author	Issue	Page
Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Devotionals...	C.A. Burk	Feb.	15
Good Race, The	R.A. Kachulis	Nov.	10
Grace of Daily Obligation, The	D.T. Smith	Nov.	13
Held by Faith	J. Crist	Oct.	4
I Know You Lord	B. Mitchell	Feb.	25
More Questions!	E. Schardt	May	15
Now the Green Blade Rises		Apr.	10
O Day of Rest and Gladness		Apr.	23
On the Way	G. Carr	May	10
Open to the Mystery of Prayer	J. Johansson	Sept.	39
Retreat: A Rest Most Busy	R. Halvorson	Apr.	30
Seized by Hope	J. Wiersma	Jul./Aug.	3
Suffering, Discipline and Joy	K. Melang	Nov.	5
Surprised by Faith	G.M. Eifrig	Oct.	21
Tuned to God's Voice	J.P. Mitcham	Nov.	30
Voice that Speaks of Peace, A	J. Kollasch	Apr.	8
The Sacred Music of African Americans	G.G. Moore	Feb.	18
Yeses Without Words	B.M. Steele	May	21

PROFILES OF WOMEN

Challenging You and Me: Mary Gonzalez	J. Wiersma	Jul./Aug.	13
Song of Hope for a New Day	K. Bates-Olson	Mar.	34
Mama: Exhortation by Example	A.M. Foster	Mar.	22
Planting Seeds of Love	J.N. Peterson	Feb.	48

RELATIONSHIPS

High-button Shoes	H. Balk	Nov.	35
Hospitality and Mutual Love	M.E.F. Albing	Dec.	7
Mentoring Through Faith	I. LaRiviere-Mestre	Oct.	35
No Need to Ask	C.L. Pless	Mar.	33
Perfect Pot of Tea, A	R.L. Messner	Oct.	17
Radical Hospitality	N.C. Everist	Dec.	4
Rambo, the Choir Dog	H. Boddy	Feb.	10
She Had Been Called	A.B. Boor	May	17
Thanks, Mrs. R	D.L. Miller	Mar.	36

REVIEWS

Andrew, You Died Too Soon	S. Edison-Swift	Mar.	32
Various Books		Jan.	42
Various Books		Apr.	40
Various Books		Sept.	41

SISTERCARE

Defense Against Hunger	M. Nickelson	Oct.	39
The Federal Budget Speaks	K.A. Bengston	Nov.	34
Health-care Reform	S. Naylor	Jul./Aug.	29
Two Faces	K.A. Bengston	Sept.	40

Article	Author	Issue	Page
THEOLOGICAL GROWTH			
Amazing Woman at Simon's, The	R.C. Wahlberg	Mar.	11
Out-Over Woman: A Woman	M.A. Moller-		
f Abundance, The	Gunderson	Jul./Aug.	6
g-Top, Mountain-Top			
Transfiguration	P.N. Hanson	Feb.	6
y Faith, Luther...	M.B. Havens	Oct.	29
Entertaining Angels	J. Holy	Jan.	19
Exhortation: Tending to Our			
Hearts	D. Andersen	Mar.	5
For the Long Haul	R.E. Sievert	Apr.	34
God's Kingdom: No Shake,			
Rattle or Roll	M.M. Rourke	Jan.	6
Hebrews: A Favorite	H.W. Chilstrom	Jan.	12
Holy Provocation!	L.B. Johnson	Sept.	13
How Rest	G.L. Heidtke	Apr.	14
Our Holy Provoking Bible	T.W. Strieter	Sept.	6
Questions, Questions	J.E. Edinger	May	13
Sabbaths for the Land	C.B. DeWitt	Apr.	38
Shakable and Shaken World, A	K. Richter	Jan.	9
Shepherd of the Valley	A. DeGroot-		
and Mountain, The	Nesdahl	Feb.	4
Signs of Faith	S. Holl	Oct.	32
Speaking of the Basics	M.B. Wold	June	4
Very Model of a Model, The	D. Nuechterlein	Nov.	28
What Does It Mean to Be a			
Lutheran?	M.L. Cobbler	June	34
Where Christians Must Stand	R.W. Klein	Jul./Aug.	17
Who Needs Creeds?	N. Koester	June	14
Why Not? (Five Sisters)	J. Little	May	31
Wives of Biblical Women, The	C.L. Beck	May	4
Wives of God, The	M.M. Rourke	May	7

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Action Program Ideas	J. Pope	Jan.	43
Witnesses to the Kingdom	V.K. Starr	Jan.	44
Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord	D. Yancey	Jan.	45
Financial Report	J. Kalkwarf	Jan.	46
Thankoffering Devotion, A	B. Belasic	Feb.	33
Introducing Pat Bilow	S. Edison-Swift	Feb.	36
Why a Triennial Convention?	C.E. Fiechter	Feb.	37
Meet the 1993-96 Women of the			
ELCA Executive Board		Feb.	38
Triennial Convention Scrapbook		Feb.	44
Helping Hands	V.K. Starr	Mar.	44
New Resource Simulates Living			
"On Welfare"	D. Strieter	Mar.	45
When "Gift" Is both Noun and			
Verb	B.B. Belasic	Mar.	46
Providing a Safe Place	C.E. Fiechter	Apr.	43
Can an Activist Rest?	J.B. Pope	Apr.	45

Title	Author	Issue	Page
Thankofferings Help the Church			
Reach Out	B.B. Belasic	Apr.	46
Program Ideas	A.M. McKinley	Apr.	48
How I Became a Woman of the			
ELCA (sort of)	L. Newmember	May	40
We're All in This Together	D. Strieter	May	44
We Are Called	D. Yancey	May	45
Embracing Self and Others	B.M. Steele	May	46
Oh Yes We Can!	C.E. Fiechter	May	47
Sheer Joy!	F.L. Fretheim	June	43
Women of the ELCA Interchange	B.B. Belasic	June	44
Leadership and Heart	B.M. Steele	June	45
Roles and Values	C.E. Fiechter	June	46
Sharing Hope	C.E. Fiechter	Jul./Aug.	59
Hope for the Future	D. Yancey	Jul./Aug.	60
Courage	B.M. Steele	Jul./Aug.	61
Bursting Forth!!	F.L. Fretheim	Jul./Aug.	62
Missing Persons	C.E. Fiechter	Sept.	44
Provoking Women to Action	J.B. Pope	Sept.	45
Hopeful Provocation	D. Yancey	Sept.	46
Ancestor or Descendant?	B.M. Steele	Sept.	47
Coming Up in LWT		Oct.	41
Grants Programs		Oct.	44
Scholarships		Oct.	45
Journey by Faith	C.E. Fiechter	Oct.	47
Again and Again	C.E. Fiechter	Nov.	41
A Hunger Fast	D. Strieter	Nov.	42
Blind Faith	D. Yancey	Nov.	43
Youth and the Poverty Puzzle	V.K. Starr	Nov.	44
Interactive Celebration:			
Our Cloud of Witnesses, An	B. Belasic	Nov.	45
A Christmas Birthday	C.E. Fiechter	Dec.	

WOMEN AND CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

Children in Poverty	J.A. Harkness	Jul./Aug.	10
Do's and Don'ts of			
Helpfulness, The	K. Melang	Jul./Aug.	42
My Name is Poverty	C. Miller	Sept.	3
Pregnant Teens and Poverty	M. Bell	Jul./Aug.	22
Seize the Hope	T. Potter	Jul./Aug.	21
29-Cent Offering for Hungry			
Children, A	D. Beckmann	Jul./Aug.	30
Women and Children in Poverty—			
A Rural Perspective	A. Kanten	Jul./Aug.	25
Women's Bean Project	A.L. McCracken	Dec.	24

itor's note,
continued from inside front cover

WT lends support to "The Hidden Promise," as various authors share important faith stories in their lives: the writer whose "Father was a pharmacist" (p. 19); Delores' story of finally arriving at Jesus' promise—the one you can bet your last breath on (p. 4); Simeon's story as reflected by three overseas women (p. 14); Arj Leegard's tale of a wedding benediction that underscores thankfulness to God (p. 31); Daniel Plander's story and drawings of Moses' encounters with God (p. 10).

As you work through "The Hidden Promise" this year, you may want to keep, for periodic review, Dan Brown's article "The Gospel and the Law: Hand in Hand." Such an excellent and clear description of the distinction between law and gospel does not often come along. We are thankful for his insights.

Note the Reader Call reminder on page 2. The year 1995 will usher in more Reader Calls than ever.

As we look to the new year in LWT, it is fitting to glance at the old—via our index (p. 43). As we prepared it, some interesting trends emerged: the theological and community sections have increased, a "Women and Children in Poverty" category appears, warm human-interest stories still hold sway in columns and devotions, and in spiritual and personal growth areas. The index can also be a helpful tool for those readers wanting to shape special program topics of their own.

However this issue inspires you to grapple with God's Word, accept it as our new year's gift to you.

Nancy J. Stelling

-----Cut here -----

Individual subscriptions at \$10.00 (regular and big print) may be sent to:

Lutheran Woman Today Circulation

Box 59303

Minneapolis, MN 55459-0303

(Group subscriptions may be available in your congregation.)

SUBSCRIPTION FOR _____ PHONE (____) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please send a gift card from _____
(name and address)

Amount enclosed: _____ regular print \$10.00 big print \$10.00

add \$6.00 for address outside North America. _____ check

____ Visa ____ Mastercard ____ American Express ____ Discover

Credit Card # ☐

Credit Card exp. date _____ Signature _____

All credit card orders must be signed

God's promise wraps
us in love, as this
month's cover wraps
around the issue.

Spread out the covers
and see the promise.

*****3-DIGIT 947
#9000248421# SRP* COMP A
GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL
UNION LIB SERIALS DEPT
2400 RIDGE RD
BERKELEY CA 94709